



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
**National Archives**

**Reference Code:** 2021/96/36

**Creator(s):** Department of the Taoiseach

**Accession Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland.  
May only be reproduced with  
the written permission of the  
Director of the National  
Archives.

his notes 20/8/94  
his notes (in return)  
21/8/94

SECRET

1. I met Mr. John Hume in Derry on the 12th August. He showed me the attached letter which he had been given at a meeting earlier that week by Mr. Adams.
2. He shared my analysis that the text as it stood was far too undiluted a statement of traditional republican doctrine to be acceptable. Unionist consent was denied in the present context and confined to hypothetical future arrangements in a united Ireland. The bald statement that "partition and the British jurisdiction breached the principal of national self-determination" was, again, the traditional hard-line position. Hume said he would be working on a text of his own which would take account of the republican position, but in language that would be generally acceptable.
3. I urged him to take a strong line against any attempt to associate him with doctrinaire Republican positions. The process had to be squarely about drawing the Republicans into constitutional non-violent nationalism, not joining them in any ambiguity. I pointed out that the vast disproportion between his and Adams' electoral and popular support showed the absurdity of any "split the difference" approach, such as seemed to underlie the letter.
4. He is particularly worried about the reactions of his SDLP colleagues during his absence in France, and is seeking to bring them back into line behind him.
5. He will be taking a break in California up to about 28th August.

*Seán*

Seán O hUiginn  
15 August 1994

*Seán*

copy cc. Inmate  
Secretary  
Mr F Murray  
Dr M Haughey  
Mr T Dalton.

9 August 1994.

John a chara,

On 2nd July I wrote to you with some suggestions on the political principles which should underpin an agreement between us and which could be developed and presented as a viable political strategy for change. Such an agreement is to be regarded as a viable alternative to the present situation it must contain the necessary dynamic to move us out of the failed policies and structures of the past and tangibly in the direction of a just and lasting settlement.

As I said to you in my last letter, it is my opinion that we should attempt to construct an Irish political consensus with an international dimension, particularly in the USA and EU, with the dynamic necessary to move the situation forward. A northern nationalist consensus is, of course, the key element in such a consensus.

As part of this there is, obviously, a need to develop a programmatic approach, on an agreed political basis, which addresses both the primary political/constitutional issues and, just as importantly in the immediate period ahead, the secondary issues such as demilitarisation, parity of esteem and equality of treatment. These secondary issues need to be addressed as a matter of urgency and at a practical level to consolidate any new approach and to enhance the peace process itself.

As you are aware we have been in correspondence with Dublin in an attempt to develop this approach. Much work has been done on the political basis on which the peace process should proceed, from an Irish nationalist perspective. This is broadly based on the points on which we were generally agreed before your holiday. These were that;

Present structures are inadequate and must be changed.

An internal settlement is not a solution.

The Irish people as a whole have a right to national self determination.

The exercise of self determination is a matter for agreement between the people of Ireland.

It is for the Irish and British governments, in consultation with all parties, to cooperate to bring this about in the shortest time possible and to legislate accordingly. The unionists can have no veto over the discussions involved in this or over the outcome of such discussions.

A solution - a negotiated peace settlement - requires political and constitutional change. The effect of such change would be to bring about the exercise by the Irish people of our right to national self determination.

An agreed unitary Ireland is the option desired by us. An agreed Ireland is only achievable and viable if it can earn and enjoy the allegiance of the different traditions on this island by accommodating diversity and providing for national reconciliation.

You will recall that this list was part of my preliminary thoughts on how we should proceed and, as such, this required that they be open to review by myself and of course by you. The following are points which I did not cover in my last letter but which, after further consideration, are obvious omissions from an Irish nationalist and democratic perspective. These are that:

Peace, to be sustained, must be based on a just and lasting settlement

Partition has failed to provide a just and lasting settlement

Partition and the British jurisdiction breach the principle of national self-determination.

The Irish people as a whole have an absolute right to national self-determination and must be able to exercise this right freely and without external impediment.

There will, of course, be differing views of how these principles should be presented but, based as they are on a common nationalist analysis, they can form the political core of any alternative political strategy agreed between us.

In addition, we, as leaders of northern nationalist opinion need also to give attention to the roles our own parties will play in any new situation which may develop, both in terms of consolidating that new situation and in terms of advancing, in a tangible manner, the rights and interests of the people we represent. Much of the detail can, of course, be worked out by our party officials as we move towards that situation, but we could, at this point agree, as part of the package which I would present, that our parties will cooperate at all levels to advance nationalist rights in general and to reverse the discrimination and marginalisation to which nationalists and republicans have been subjected. We should also develop an agreed approach to advancing the peace process in international forums particularly the EU and the USA.

I look forward to your thoughts on all of this and to talking to you soon.

Is Mise.